The third meeting regarding the Digital Tourism project was initially planned to take place in The Netherlands, hosted by our project partner Stichting Dutch Foundation of Innovation Welfare 2 Work. However, due to Covid-19, the two-day meeting was held online on the 25th and 26th March 2020.

The main objective of Digital Tourism project is to provide professional knowledge and skills targeting promotional and marketing strategies based on IT (e-tourism), as digital services raises companies’ profile on generating economic development. The most important impacts are an increased labour mobility among recent graduates, as well as an increased level of online tourism promotion and interactivity within B2B and B2C in Tourism sector.

The meeting was moderated by Sérgio Fernandes from Insignare as coordinator of the project introducing the project’s latest developments. Sérgio also presented the progress in the Work Package 1, then Intermediate Report conclusions and financial and administrative requirements for the second year were discussed among the partners.

In the second part of the day, the partners mainly discussed Work Package 3 – deliverable 1 (Profile of the DT technician) and deliverable 2 (Curricula of the DT technician) and validated Authorities’ suggestions. This discussion was followed by the Work Package 4 –WBL period (I), introduced by Pieter van Schie, from DFIW2W. In particular, many aspects of the Assessment standards; of the work-based learning assessment needs; the approved WBL characteristics and assessment process; and of the experimentation tests, were validated by the partnership.

https://digitaltourism.wixsite.com/digitaltourism
https://www.facebook.com/DigitalTourismeu/
https://www.instagram.com/digitaltourismeu/
The second day started with the second part of Pieter’s presentation about other aspects of Work Package 4 – WBL period (II). This part was about validating the effectiveness of DT qualification in terms of employability or meeting client satisfaction and satisfaction of students and companies; WBL skills assessment protocol Requirements; and discussing DTQ Validation Committee first results.

Luca Pagliaricci, from EGINA introduced then the Work Package 5 by presenting D5 and D6 internal and external reviews’ results, followed by Valentina Chanina and Vittoria Valentina Di Gennaro from EFVET, respectively about presenting Dissemination suggestions for the second year, according to the Dissemination Plan, and gathering Dissemination information for the Digital Tourism Newsletter. Moreover, EFVET presented the main dissemination activities of the projects since the last meeting.

The meeting was concluded by Sérgio and by Marijo Irastorza, from CDEA, who presented the progress required before the next meeting in Spain, and other key topics for discussion. Final comments were made for the next meeting dates and the circumstances produced by the Covid-19 which may affect the next meeting.

On the 17th of February the Italian partners of the Digital Tourism organised a dissemination and review event to present the results of the project. In particular, the event focused on the Job Profile and the Curriculum to open up the discussion with experts and stakeholders in the tourism field.

The event was held in the school auditorium where around 20 people attended. ITE Scarpellini staff took care of the organisation of the event and delivered the presentations to showcase the two key deliverables of the project. In addition to that, it was a great opportunity to present to the public the adaptation of the curriculum to the Italian educational system and discuss with experts its exploitation.

Among the public we welcomed, teachers and experts from the marketing field, hotel managers and directors of important events in our region such as Festival della Filosofia e della Scienza that would very much benefit from job profiles such as the one the Digital Tourism project is designing.
The overall feedback received by the participants to the event was extremely positive. Experts and stakeholders were very enthusiastic about the new profile and agreed on the need of updating existing curricula in order to face the challenges the digital transformation is putting us through.

Many interesting suggestions were collected providing valuable insight for the improvement of the two deliverables. In this regard, EGINA's staff took part in the event to take note of the relevant proposals made by the participants in the discussion contributing to the success of the event and its impact on the quality of the project.
On 3 April 2020, TKNIKA organised a virtual Dissemination Day on Erasmus+ KA2/KA3 projects via Twitter. As a partner, TKNIKA also introduced from The Basque Country our Digital Tourism project.

General Director of Technology and Advance Learning of Vice Ministry of The Basque Government, Rikardo Lamadrid, welcomed the virtual audience and invited them to follow and share the video of the presentation at this link.

Ricardo followed with the presentation and, with the support of this slideshare, introduced the Digital Tourism project as a project aiming to develop a new qualification for tourism, one of the fastest growing sectors in both Europe and the world.

So far 56 projects where VET colleges are involved have been presented. At this purpose, this booklet provides a comprehensive summary of the Erasmus+ Innovation projects active in the VET centres of the Basque Country during the Academic Year 2019-2020.

CDEA and EfVET also took part to the online event and were very active in disseminating and sharing posts regarding the project presentation which received many likes and were re-tweeted in turn by many other individuals and organisations.

ACISO – Ourém-Fátima Business Association (Portugal) has been promoting Religious Tourism at national and international level, in a systematic way, aiming to establish new commercial relations between Hosted Buyers and Suppliers and its consolidation. These actions, carried out in a systematic way, provided ACISO's Tourism Department with a solid know-how regarding the organization, planning and execution of workshops, fam / press trips, participation in international fairs and various events.

The Association has been making a growing effort to promote not only Fátima and Ourém, but the entire Center region and even Portugal. For that, it has been increasingly specializing in the promotion of religious tourism, with a special emphasis on trade, with Fátima being the focus destination. Tourism organisations and its professionals are, therefore, its main target.
For the past years, this effort comprises the participation in several Tourism fairs and workshops around the world: ITTE Manila, in Philippines; Workshop and B2B Meetings, in Indonesia; Catholic Expo, in Brasil; Faith Travel Association/Travel Exchange, in the USA; FIT, in Argentina; EuroSphere, in Vietnam; Religious Tourism International Congress, in Poland.

During these events, B2B meetings are held. To differentiate our product from all the others being offered there, ACISO invested in a Virtual Reality portable equipment: based on a mobile phone, the app allows several users to use Virtual Reality glasses to get in touch with Fátima’s message and tourism products. Having limited time but almost unlimited offers to analyse, trade professionals need a different approach - and the Virtual Reality solution we provide makes that difference, as it focuses on a digital experience, for both sight and sound. For most professionals, it’s the first time they get in touch with such digital service, which assures this experience to be remembered for a long period. Part of it can be seen here. All these professionals are then invited to come to Fátima / Portugal for the International Workshop for Religious Tourism, world’s most important professional meeting for Religious Tourism, where they can see in loco everything that Fátima has to offer.

The Inclusion of Digital Tourism course in Portuguese Qualification System

The main goal of Digital Tourism project is to create a new training offer and allowing it to be available for training providers all over Europe. For that, it is expected that the partners submit this offer, with its eventual adaptations, to their regional or national Validating Authorities.

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So far, the first draft was already sent for appreciation to Italian Umbria’s Regional Authority, Spanish Basque Country Regional Authority and Portuguese National Authority. This article will only focus on the later.

The ultimate stage for validating a training offer in Portugal is when it is included in the National Qualifications Catalogue, which aims to regulate and structure educational and training offers with double certification (both academic and professional), making them relevant and adjusted to the demands of companies and the labour market, based on current and emerging needs.

That happens after its approval by ANQEP (National Agency for Qualification and Vocational Education), the public institute which is responsible for managing Portuguese National Qualification System. This approval is granted after the Sectorial Councils for Qualification, technical-consultative working groups with an eminently strategic function, which work as a first line of a more operational work that is intended to develop in a logic of network and cooperation, provide a positive evaluation.

These Councils comprise several stakeholders of the related sector: Ministries that oversee that specific sector; Social Partners; Companies; Training Providers (public or private schools, VET schools, training centers, accredited training bodies, technological schools, etc.); Technological centers; public authorities that regulate access to professions and/or with responsibility for specific certifications and/or with responsibility for regulating sectors of that economic activity; independent experts.

Our project is on an early stage – the draft was presented to the Agency staff for a first analysis. The idea was to check if the course proposal was on the right path, as it already included the job profile and course curricula. If the feedback was good, the consortium would be able to continue the work.

INSIGNARE was quite happy to receive the official communication stating the course and its job description met the requirements and congratulating the consortium for the project. The second part of the work could then start – developing the course’s units, which will be done in the second year of the project.

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**Online teaching: between difficulties and rewards**

Lucia Marchi, Chemistry Teacher secondary School - ITT Buonarroti Trento Italy

Teaching online isn’t easy but it can work and be rewarding.

It is a complete new subject for me. I’ve taken several online courses, as a student I love it! But being on the other side, managing the technology, preparing materials, interacting with students remotely is something that I want to improve, but still scares me. Moving the teaching from face-to-face to online in response to a global crisis is a necessary solution, but it comes with many challenges.

In a normal classroom, the teacher-student relationship is safer, more reliable and understanding. What I mean is that the teachers have the ability to read the body language of students (who may feel uncomfortable or do not necessarily understand a topic), can give individual/personalised attention to the students struggling, or who may be bored and need more. Beside that accessibility and access sometimes could be a problem, since parents of the students work from home, there has to be at least two computers at home, since a student and their parents cannot work on the same computer at the same time. Home-working and online lessons usually take place during the same time, so if a family has only one computer which is used by mum for home-working, the pupil cannot participate in online lessons.
Keeping students motivated and engaged is the ultimate challenge, once the hurdles of accessibility and limitations are covered. Differentiation in instruction, task and expectation will be at the core of distance learning. Although this will be a milestone achieved in small steps.

I think the balance of synchronous / asynchronous learning is going to be another of the make-or-break factors in the success or otherwise of online teaching and learning.

In particular, I think there's a temptation to simply say that the time normally spent face to face in a classroom can just be timetabled to go online. This would be tedious at best, and there are physical (and probably mental) health and safety considerations about spending long periods sitting in front of a computer.

What am I doing? At the moment I send material, they have it ready for the online synchronous session the following day as the 'flipped classroom' approach. I try also to maintain the class community and to encourage them to express feelings. Students can be co-creators in that they are more deeply involved in deciding what they're going to learn. This might be through negotiating a scheme of work, or by collaborating to choose ways they can demonstrate what they have been working on. By involving our students in what they're working on, they could become more engaged and motivated to try out new ideas.

Tourism Digital Promotion during COVID19 Pandemic

Tourism is the most affected sector by COVID 19 pandemic, with all its sub-sectors suffering from its huge consequences. According to World Tourism Organization (WTO), on April 7th and even considering the evolving nature of the situation, it is too early to estimate the full impact of the COVID-19 on international tourism. For its initial assessment, WTO takes the SARS scenario of 2003 as a benchmark, factoring in the size and dynamics of global travel and current disruptions, the geographic spread of COVID-19 and its potential economic impact:

- As of today, UNWTO estimates that in 2020 global international tourist arrivals could decline between 20 to 30%, down from an estimated growth of 3% to 4% forecast in early January 2020.
- This could translate into a loss of US$ 30 to 50 billion in spending by international visitors (international tourism receipts).
- Focusing on the countries with over 5 000 cases of reported COVID 19, being some of them on the world top 10 of destinations:
It's unclear for the players of this vital economic sector when the end of this crisis will be seen. However, regional and national Tourism Boards are still working to promote their destinations, as this crisis will be over and tourists will still want to travel. But how should they do this, if many members of their target groups are at home, on voluntary or compulsory isolation? Using digital tools can be one of the best alternatives.

Let’s look at some examples from Portuguese regional and national Boards. Although different, there are some common approaches: digitally based, as all use social media advertising, Youtube and media channels displays; stay at home; postpone your holidays, don’t cancel them; appeal to experiences and to emotions; short videos with simple messages; easy to share and to remember. The first one is mostly targeted to external markets; the second and third to internal ones.

Tourism of Portugal, our national Tourism Board, changed its award-winning campaign “Can’t Skip Portugal” to “Can’t Skip Hope”. The message is “It's time to stop and to take a break, for the good of the world”. It is emphasised that now it is also necessary to "dream about those incredible days that will come, soon enough to be able to say again: Visit Portugal!"

The clip was designed and produced with all teams working from home. Therefore, images taken in recent years for other films were gathered and a smartphone was used to record the voiceover.

Tourism Center of Portugal, one of the regional Boards, prepared the campaign “There will be time!”, which aims to point the way to a near future, post-pandemic Covid-19. An appeal is made to the Portuguese to stay at home for the moment, but that they can return later to get to know the region better, as this destination "will be waiting for them when the disease is overcome”.

Other regional Board is Algarve, our most well-known region. It aimed to tell with this video to the Portuguese that they should stay safely at home and postpone their holidays, as the Algarve and its people will continue in the same place to welcome them with open arms when everything is over: “Today I don't have you here, but I hear you by heart and I know that tomorrow I'm your kiss again. Remember me. Algarve”.

### The impact of Covid-19 on the Tourism Sector

The pandemic Covid-19 has a big effect on all economic activities, but obviously on tourism. The impact of this industry in Portugal leads us to believe that our economy will suffer a major setback that it is essential to analyse and evaluate the prospect for the future.

The Associação Hoteleira de Portugal - largest and most representative hotel association - estimates that half of the hotels...
in Portugal will be closed from 20/03/2020 due to the impact of COVID 19, and the drop in turnover will be 30% at the end of the year.

Between April and June it will be the most critical period in which the billing period will be only 20% of the usual recorded in other years. Only in July are expected some hotels to return to the market. There are already financial measures promoted by the government and the banks so that the companies’ treasury can be maintained. However, the moments of crisis experienced worldwide over the years, allow us to draw some conclusions and take advantage of knowledge and experience to enhance strategies to overcome this crisis in the tourism sector.

In the future, the behaviour of tourists will be always different: they will travel less, they will travel to nearby destinations, they will travel mainly to health-safe destinations, and they will spend less time at each destination. Tourism companies, big or small ones, should look for techniques and methods to remain in the market and make themselves known in the only privileged means of contact with the customer….the digital world.

Digital tools, specifically the website has a very important role at this stage, but it has to be managed with great care. The contents have to be worked out very well: defining keywords, placing attractive images, constantly updating campaigns, providing content that demonstrates the positioning as well as the differentiating factors in relation to the competition. Do it differently! But do it!
The Partnership Digital Tourism (DT) is 18 months on its way. After the DT Frame Work was built in Italy, last year (the DT-Partnership formulated, developed and agreed on the job description of the DT technician and the curriculum has also been developed in concept), the Work Based Learning work (WBL) package is currently dealt with.

Work Based Learning

Working together with so many countries is a lot of fun! It gives you a major boost to acquire new knowledge about the VET systems of the DT Partnership countries and innovate a totally new study course. Of course it’s challenging as well. The schools of Italy, Portugal, and Spain have to agree on documents and added value of the new content in this fresh Digital Tourism Course. Other partners from Portugal, Italy and Netherlands have a different role: They are the ‘Work Based Learning (WBL) experts’ and they look at the course from the employers’ perspective. The WBL-period (the internship or apprenticeship period) is a very important part of the course, as theory will be assessed through practice by doing. The creation and development of the the documents (Learning Plan, Learning Agreement, Identification Forms, Identification of soft and hard skills, the assessment tools) around the work based learning parts are very intensive but worthwhile as well.

Internship and / or apprenticeship?

Formulating and developing a fresh innovative VET course is not easy. But let’s be honest, if it was easy everyone would do it. To make sure we make progress we agreed on the learning paths and how to get there. One of the pitfalls of EU partnerships is that, because of our different languages and the use of English as our way of communication in the partnership, we must never assume that terminology and definitions used, means exactly the same for each partner.

One of the interesting discussions we had during our partnership meetings was how we should call the Work Based Learning period. Non-English speaking countries often use the words internship, apprenticeship, traineeship, practise by doing, on-the-job-training and work placement and assume it’s more or less the same. To avoid misunderstandings and mistakes we have formally agreed we will use only two terminologies (internship and apprenticeship). We have defined them below:

Internship: A short fixed term (30 days – 90 days) Work Based Learning hands on training, acquiring work experience without payment at a DT Company

Apprenticeship: A Work Based Learning (more than 90 days) hands on training (with pay), acquiring more than just work experience at a DT Company (with potentially a guaranteed job after completion).

The Partnership also agreed that students are only allowed to follow an internship or apprenticeship if they comply on “knowledge and technical skills” to a minimum basic level: At least level 3 on a scale from 1 to 5. It’s allowed to have 2 negatives overall. It’s not allowed to score lower then the average on the part ‘Attitudes and Behaviour’. Currently we are assessing and validating the first WBL documents in the Digital Tourism Qualification Forum with our stakeholders and experts.
Insignare - Portugal - Coordinator of the project and owner of Fatima Hospitality School

ITE F. Scarpellini - Italy - Vocational Technical School

CDEA - Spain - VET Higher Education College

ACISO - Portugal - Business Association

EfVET - Belgium - Belgium European Umbrella Organisation

EGINA - Italy - Agency connected to schools and companies

Dutch Foundation of Innovation Welfare 2 Work - The Netherlands - Social innovator on entrepreneurship, work and education, ‘work based learning’ expert

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